

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for simultaneously determining a respective frame alignment in each of a plurality of channels, the apparatus comprising:

5 means for simultaneously storing a frame alignment state for a plurality of frame bit candidates for each of the plurality of channels;

means for receiving data from the plurality of channels;

means for updating the stored frame alignment state for each of the plurality of frame bit candidates in accordance with the received data; and

10 means for declaring the respective frame alignment in accordance with the updated frame alignment state for a certain one of the plurality of frame bit candidates for each of the plurality of channels.

2. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the updating means includes:

15 means for retrieving the frame alignment state for certain of the frame bit candidates associated with the received data;

means for comparing the received data with expected framing data based on the retrieved frame alignment states;

20 means for advancing the retrieved frame alignment states upon a successful comparison of the received data with the expected framing data;

means for withholding advancing of the retrieved frame alignment states upon a failed comparison of the received data with the expected framing data; and

means for replacing the retrieved frame alignment states with the updated frame alignment states in the storing means.

5

3. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the withholding means is operative to reset the retrieved frame alignment states to less advanced states in accordance with current frame alignment strengths indicated by the retrieved frame alignment states.

10

4. An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising :

means for polling the plurality of channels for frame alignment requests; and

means for controlling the operation of the receiving means, the updating means and the declaring means for certain of the plurality of channels based on the polled frame alignment requests.

15

5. An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each of the plurality of channels includes an inline framer, the inline framer comprising:

means for generating the frame alignment request; and

means for processing channel data using an old frame alignment simultaneously

20 while the respective frame alignment is being determined.

6. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the respective frame alignment for a first one of the plurality of channels is in accordance with a first framing scheme, and wherein the respective frame alignment for a second one of the plurality of channels is in accordance with a second framing scheme, the first and second framing schemes both being one of DS1 SF, DS1 DDS, DS1 SLC-96, and ITU-T G.704 based E1.

7. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the respective frame alignment for a first one of the plurality of channels is in accordance with a first framing scheme, and wherein the respective frame alignment for a second one of the plurality of channels is in accordance with a second framing scheme, the first and second framing schemes each being a different one of DS1 SF, DS1 DDS, DS1 SLC-96, and ITU-T G.704 based E1.

8. A method for simultaneously determining a respective frame alignment in each of a plurality of channels, the apparatus comprising:

simultaneously storing a frame alignment state for a plurality of frame bit candidates for each of the plurality of channels;
receiving data from the plurality of channels;
updating the stored frame alignment state for each of the plurality of frame bit candidates in accordance with the received data; and

declaring the respective frame alignment in accordance with the updated frame alignment state for a certain one of the plurality of frame bit candidates for each of the plurality of channels.

5 9. A method according to claim 8, wherein the updating step includes:

retrieving the frame alignment state for certain of the frame bit candidates associated with the received data;

comparing the received data with expected framing data based on the retrieved frame alignment states;

10 advancing the retrieved frame alignment states upon a successful comparison of the received data with the expected framing data;

withholding advancing of the retrieved frame alignment states upon a failed comparison of the received data with the expected framing data; and

15 replacing the retrieved frame alignment states with the updated frame alignment states.

10 10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the withholding step includes resetting the retrieved frame alignment states to less advanced states in accordance with current frame alignment strengths indicated by the retrieved frame alignment states.

20

11. A method according to claim 8, further comprising :

polling the plurality of channels for frame alignment requests; and

controlling performance of the receiving step, the updating step and the declaring step for certain of the plurality of channels based on the polled frame alignment requests.

5

12. A method according to claim 11, wherein each of the plurality of channels includes an inline framer, the method further comprising:

processing channel data at the inline framer using an old frame alignment simultaneously while the respective frame alignment is being determined.

10

13. A method according to claim 8, wherein the respective frame alignment for a first one of the plurality of channels is in accordance with a first framing scheme, and wherein the respective frame alignment for a second one of the plurality of channels is in accordance with a second framing scheme, the first and second framing schemes both being one of DS1 SF, DS1 DDS, DS1 SLC-96, and ITU-T G.704 based E1.

15

14. A method according to claim 8, wherein the respective frame alignment for a first one of the plurality of channels is in accordance with a first framing scheme, and wherein the respective frame alignment for a second one of the plurality of channels is in accordance with a second framing scheme, the first and second framing schemes each being a different one of DS1 SF, DS1 DDS, DS1 SLC-96, and ITU-T G.704 based E1.

20

15. An apparatus, comprising:

a frame alignment engine coupled to a bus for commonly receiving data from a plurality of channels, the received data from each of the plurality of channels including a framing pattern embedded at a frame bit offset with respect to an arbitrary starting bit of a stream of data

5 respectively associated with each of the plurality of channels;

a memory coupled to the frame alignment engine, the memory having a plurality of channel state entries respectively corresponding to the plurality of channels, each of the channel state entries including a counter referenced to the arbitrary starting bit, the memory further having a plurality of data state entries for each of the plurality of channels, the plurality of data state entries respectively corresponding to a plurality of frame bit candidates, the frame alignment engine being responsive to data received from a requesting one of the channels so as to retrieve the counter for the requesting channel, and to retrieve certain of the data state entries corresponding to the received data from the requesting channel based on the counter; and

10 a state machine coupled to the frame alignment engine, the state machine
15 including a comparator that is adapted to compare the data received from the requesting channel with the framing pattern and to update the certain data state entries based on the comparison.

an out of frame detector coupled to the frame register for processing the

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2
--	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	---